

## KISMET PARK PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILD SAFE POLICY

### STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT TO CHILD SAFETY

Kismet Park Primary School is committed to child safety and implements policies and procedures that support our leadership team, staff and volunteers to achieve commitments outlined in Ministerial Order No. 870 (available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe) ).

Our community is committed to the safety, participation, happiness and empowerment of all children, supporting and respecting all children, staff, volunteers and members of the wider community. We are committed to:

- the cultural safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- the cultural safety of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- providing a safe environment for children who are vulnerable or who have a disability.

At Kismet Park Primary School there is zero tolerance of child abuse. All allegations and safety concerns are treated very seriously and consistently with our policies and procedures.

We are committed to preventing child abuse and identifying risks early to remove and reduce these risks. We have human resources and recruitment practices for all staff and volunteers. Our school is committed to regularly training and educating our staff and volunteers on child abuse risks.

Ministerial Order No. 870 (available at [www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe](http://www.vrqa.vic.gov.au/childsafe) ) states that Child abuse includes;

- a) Any act committed against a child involving –
  - i. A sexual offence; or
  - ii. an offence under section 49 B (2) of the *Crimes Act 1958* (grooming); and
- b) The infliction, on a child, of –
  - i. Physical violence; or
  - ii. Serious emotional or psychological harm, and
- c) Serious neglect of a child.

At Kismet Park Primary we meet our legal and moral obligations to contact authorities when we are worried about a child’s safety.

### CHILD SAFE POLICY

Our Child Safe Policy promotes the empowerment of children who are active participants at Kismet Park Primary School. We involve them when making decisions, especially about matters that directly affect them. We listen to their views and respect what they have to say. We promote diversity and tolerance in our organisation, and people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds are welcome and safe. In particular we:

- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children
- promote the cultural safety, participation and empowerment of children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds
- ensure that children with a disability or who are vulnerable are safe and can participate equally.

This policy guides our staff and volunteers on how to behave with children in our organisation. All of our staff and volunteers must agree to abide by our code of conduct which specifies the standards of conduct required when working with children. All staff and volunteers, as well as children and their families, are given the opportunity to contribute to the development of the code of conduct.

## **Training and supervision**

Training and education is important to ensure that everyone in our organisation understands that child safety is everyone's responsibility.

Our organisational culture aims for all staff and volunteers (in addition to parents/carers and children) to feel confident and comfortable in discussing any allegations of child abuse or child safety concerns. During first term, we induct our staff and volunteers to identify, assess, and minimise risks of child abuse and to detect potential signs of child abuse.

We also support our staff and volunteers through ongoing supervision to: develop their skills to protect children from abuse; and promote the cultural safety of Aboriginal children, the cultural safety of children from linguistically and/or diverse backgrounds, and the safety of children with a disability.

New employees and volunteers will be monitored to ensure they understand Kismet Park Primary School's commitment to child safety and that everyone has a role to play in protecting children from abuse, as well as checking that their behaviour towards children is safe and appropriate (please refer to this organisation's code of conduct to understand appropriate behaviour further). Any inappropriate behaviour will be reported through appropriate channels, including the Department of Health and Human Services and Victoria Police, depending on the severity and urgency of the matter.

## **Recruitment**

Kismet Park Primary School takes all reasonable steps to ensure that we employ the most suitable and appropriate people to work with children. We develop selection criteria which clearly demonstrate our commitment to child safety and an awareness of our social and legislative responsibilities. Alongside the Department of Education and Training (DET) recruitment processes, we will ensure our recruitment processes include:

- Child Safe selection criteria in job descriptions for both teaching and non-teaching positions
- VIT registration for teachers – which includes a Criminal Records Check.
- Criminal Records Checks where applicable for other employees
- Working with Children Checks where applicable for other employees
- Face-to-face interviews
- Detailed reference checks from previous employers, including from the applicant's most recent principal if applicable.

Our school understands that when recruiting staff and volunteers we have ethical as well as legislative obligations. All people, **other than registered teachers**, engaged in child-related work, including volunteers, are required to hold a Working with Children Check and to provide evidence of this Check.

## **Fair procedures for personnel**

The safety and wellbeing of children is our primary concern. We are also fair and just to personnel. The decisions we make when recruiting, assessing incidents, and undertaking disciplinary action will always be thorough, transparent, and based on evidence.

We record all allegations of abuse and safety concerns using our incident reporting form<sup>1</sup>, including investigation updates. All records are securely stored.

If an allegation of abuse or a safety concern is raised, we provide updates to children and families on progress and any actions we as an organisation take.

## **Privacy**

All personal information considered or recorded will respect the privacy of the individuals involved, whether they be staff, volunteers, parents or children, unless there is a risk to someone's safety. We have safeguards and practices in place to ensure any personal information is protected. Everyone is entitled to know how this information is recorded, what will be done with it, and who will have access to it.

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<sup>1</sup> Kismet Park Incident Report Form

## Legislative responsibilities

Kismet Park Primary School takes our legal responsibilities seriously, including:

- **Failure to disclose:** Reporting child sexual abuse is a community-wide responsibility. All adults in Victoria who have a reasonable belief that an adult has committed a sexual offence against a child under 16 have an obligation to report that information to the police.<sup>2</sup>
- **Failure to protect:** People of authority in our organisation will commit an offence if they know of a substantial risk of child sexual abuse and have the power or responsibility to reduce or remove the risk, but negligently fail to do so.<sup>3</sup>
- Any personnel who are **mandatory reporters** must comply with their duties.<sup>4</sup>

## Risk management

In Victoria, organisations are required to protect children when a risk is identified (see information about failure to protect above).

We have risk management strategies in place to identify, assess, and take steps to minimise child abuse risks, which include risks posed by physical environments (for example, any doors that can lock), and online environments (for example, no staff or volunteer is to have contact with a child in organisations on social media).

## Allegations, concerns and complaints

Kismet Park Primary School takes all allegations seriously and has practices in place to investigate thoroughly and quickly. Our staff and volunteers are trained to deal appropriately with allegations.

We work to ensure all children, families, staff and volunteers know what to do and who to tell if they observe abuse or are a victim, and if they notice inappropriate behaviour.

We all have a responsibility to report an allegation of abuse if we have a reasonable belief that an incident took place (see information about failure to disclose above).

If an adult has a **reasonable belief**<sup>5</sup> that an incident has occurred then they must report the incident. Factors contributing to reasonable belief may be:

- a child states they or someone they know has been abused (noting that sometimes the child may in fact be referring to themselves)
- behaviour consistent with that of an abuse victim is observed<sup>6</sup>
- someone else has raised a suspicion of abuse but is unwilling to report it
- observing suspicious behaviour.

## Regular review

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<sup>2</sup> A person will not commit this offence if they have a reasonable excuse for not disclosing the information, including a fear for their safety or where the information has already been disclosed.

Further information about the failure to disclose offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+disclose+offence>.

<sup>3</sup> Further information about the failure to protect offence is available on the [Department of Justice and Regulation website](http://www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence) <www.justice.vic.gov.au/home/safer+communities/protecting+children+and+families/failure+to+protect+offence>.

<sup>4</sup> Mandatory reporters (doctors, nurses, midwives, teachers (including early childhood teachers), principals and police) must report to child protection if they believe on reasonable grounds that a child is in need of protection from physical injury or sexual abuse.

<sup>5</sup> Reference to Mandatory Reporting.

See the Department of Health and Human Services website for information about [how to make a report to child protection](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/about-the-department/documents-and-resources/reports-publications/guide-to-making-a-report-to-child-protection-or-child-first>.

<sup>6</sup> For example behaviour, please see [An Overview of the Victorian child safe standards:](http://www.dhs.vic.gov.au/__data/assets/word_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards_overview.doc) <www.dhs.vic.gov.au/\_\_data/assets/word\_doc/0005/955598/Child-safe-standards\_overview.doc>

# ‘Building the Foundations of Success and Happiness’



This policy will be reviewed every two years and following significant incidents if they occur. We will ensure that families and children have the opportunity to contribute. Where possible we do our best to work with local Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, culturally and/or linguistically diverse communities and people with a disability.

Version 2 November 2017

This policy was last ratified by School Council on 20<sup>th</sup> November 2017

Name of School Council President: Mr Glenn Campbell

Signature of School Council President.....

This policy will be reviewed in 2019 or as required to comply with legislation.